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ABSTRACT

A search of the philosophical, psychological, and experimental literature resulted in an operational definition of empathy, "A Hierarchy of Empathy." In a three age-level study employing an instrument derived from "A Hierarchy of Empathy," creative dramatic and discussion responses to a film of a Northwest American Indian legend were videotaped. Three judges recorded the stages of empathic response of preschoolers, fifth/sixth graders, and adults from the videotaped protocols. Results, displayed in visual form, lend general support to the developmental and hierarchical hypotheses. Theoretical, practical, and research implications of the study center on refining the operational definition of empathy, relating empathic development to moral development, and training children to recognize and employ empathic behavior. (Author/AA)

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A Hierarchy of Empathy Applied to Child and Adult Response to Filmed Literature

Dr. Dorothy Jean Woodbury

Abstract

In answer to the first of two questions, "What is empathy?", a search of the philosophical, psychological, and experimental literature resulted in an original operational definition of empathy called A Hierarchy of Empathy. The attempt to subject the definition to observation within the educational field led to the formulation of the second question, "Can empathy be identified in response to filmed literature?" A three age-level study employing an instrument derived from A Hierarchy of Empathy made use of videotaped creative dramatic and discussion response to Loon's Necklace, a Northwest American Indian legend on film. Three judges trained to observe and record on an instrument sheet the stages of empathic response of pre-schoolers, 5th-6th graders, and adults as seen on videotaped protocols, obtained a degree of reliability that highlighted areas in the construct requiring further definition. Results displayed in visual form lend general support to the developmental and hierarchical hypotheses. Theoretical, practical, and research implications of the study center around further refinement of the operational definition of empathy, relating of empathic development to moral development, and training of children in the classroom to recognize and employ empathic behavior.

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Introduction

In a society that is progressively becoming more person-oriented, the concept of a special human talent for sensing and understanding the feelings and ideas of other persons has great appeal. This talent is sometimes called empathy. A desire to learn about historical and current usages of the term empathy and to define it operationally led the writer into a two-year exploration of philosophical and psychological writings, as well as a search of the experimental and descriptive literature on empathy. At the same time, the writer was working on a constantly evolving construct of empathy that was highly subjective at first, but which gradually became more operational. Through a search of the existent literature about empathy and with continuing guidance from the writer's chairman and members of her doctoral committee, the effort resulted in the original construct, A Hierarchy of Empathy, which attempted to operationalize a developmental cognitive process which was hierarchical in nature. A Hierarchy of Empathy was the writer's theoretical answer to the self-imposed question, "What is empathy?"

A second and practical question remained, "Can empathy Be identified in the educational field?" It was natural for the writer to narrow the field to response to literature because her area of interest was in language and reading. Through the process of exploring possible forms that a field study might take, and considering the difficulties that might be encountered in asking both children and adults to read the same story, the question evolved into its final form, "Can empathy be identified in response to filmed literature?"

Loon's Necklace (1948), a Northwest American Indian legend on film, was chosen for two reasons. First, a legend tends to have universal

appeal. Second, the stylized and unemotional presentation used in the film would leave viewers free to respond in their own way.

The two questions, one theoretical and one practical, formed the basis of the study reported in this article. A large body of philosophical and psychological literature on empathy exists. Constructs have been developed and experimental studies of empathic behavior have been made within the field of counseling and psychotherapy. However, no other constructs of empathy, to the writer's knowledge, and very few studies have been produced in the field of education. Bormuth's Taxonomy of Literacy Behaviors (1973-74) placed empathy under the skill of inference which enables a person "to derive information not explicitly signalled by the reading task." Thus empathy as a way of responding to literature has been recognized. This article reports on the writer's attempt to operationally define empathy and to put the definition to the test of observation in a field study of response to filmed literature.

Method

Empathy Defined by Contrast

With the coining of the word empathy in the early twentieth century to express the concept Einfühlung advanced by Lipps, a process of evolving differentiation in meanings formerly associated with sympathy was set in motion. The term empathy attracted the many connotations accruing from the emerging scientific study of psychology. The older term sympathy retained the slightly impersonal meanings that had prevailed in the humanistic and literary tradition.

The process was not and is not clear-cut. While empathy seems to attract new uses daily, sympathy appears to be retiring gradually into

obscurity. This trend may reflect the increasing popular interest in psychological phenomena rather than a real lack of need for a distinction. Empathy, in this study, is contrasted with sympathy and a place for each word as a descriptor of personal feelings is indicated.

Because the highest stage of empathy to be found in the writer's theoretical construct is Altruistic Empathy, an association with morality was suggested. Altruism is a way of thinking that has often been associated with morality. Since altruism can be associated with both empathy and morality, the distinction between the two was developed in this study. Empathy was identified as an inter-personal way of knowing while morality was defined as a social attitude. Morality was considered as a generalization of repeated instances of empathy to society as a whole.

Empathy Defined by Attributes

Once empathy was defined by contrast, it became necessary to specify the attributes which characterize empathy. Stein's On the Problem of Empathy (1964), Stewart's Preface to Empathy (1956), and Katz's Empathy: Its Nature and Uses (1963) were the prime sources of attributes associated with empathy. To a lesser degree, Scheler's The Nature of Sympathy (1954) and Chatterjee's Our Knowledge of Other Selves (1963) contributed insights. Through an exploration of these theorists' writings, some commonly accepted attributes of empathy were listed.

The Structure and Process of Empathy

The definition of empathy was continued in terms of its structure and process. Stewart's stages were especially useful in suggesting structure. And Katz's uses of empathy aided in describing the process. A review of Piaget's cognitive develoomental theory suggested the framework for

A Hierarchy of Empathy.

Empathy Tested in the Field Study

Two assumptions were implicit in the definition of empathy called A Hierarchy of Empathy. They were: (1) that the development of empathy is age-related or developmental, and (2) that the development of empathy is hierarchical and dependent at each more advanced level upon the previous development of levels below.

In order to test these assumptions, two hypotheses were framed.

Hypothesis 1. The proportion of instances of higher stages of empathic response will increase as the age of the respondents increases.

Hypothesis 2. The trend of stages of empathy to be observed over a period of time in a group dramatization that is freely planned by the participants will be upward rather than downward.

Rationale for the field study. The two hypotheses, which rest on assumptions of development and hierarchy in the growth of empathy, both derived from and helped shape the field study. Hypothesis 1, which applies to the developmental property of empathy, required a study to be done across age-levels. Hypothesis 2, which concerns the hierarchical property of empathy, assumed that the medium of response would be creative drama, an assumption which reflected the interactive relationship which existed between the framing of the hypotheses and the planning for a study to be done in an educational setting with open-ended rather than prescribed response.

Creative drama was chosen as the primary mode of response because it provides scope for sensory-motor, affective and cognitive responses, both verbal and non-verbal. Discussion based on questions asked by the

writer was included because of the possibility that much high-level empathic response would be better exhibited through that medium.

A decision to videotape the creative dramatic and discussion sessions followed logically from the nature of the response to be elicited. The writer decided that videotape would preserve physical, emotional, and cognitive responses for later analysis.

The decision to use Loon's Necklace, a filmed Northwest American Indian legend as a stimulus for response derived from misgivings about the use of printed literature because of the wide age-range involved.

The measure. The instrument derived from A Hierarchy of Empathy is printed below. Descriptions were shortened and focused on behaviors to be observed. The six stages of empathy were labeled by the appropriate number on the instrument, and a seventh category was included to indicate pauses, short periods of silence, and periods of confusion as seen on the videotaped protocols.

Insert "A Summary of Levels and Stages for Analysis of Empathy--the Instrument"

The Instrument Sheet. A sheet which abstracted the instrument was also developed. It provided seven columns to represent the seven categories of the instrument. It provided thirty-three rows which represented ten-second intervals. Judges' marks within the columns and rows indicated stages of empathic response, or confusion, observed during sequential ten-second intervals.

Design of the field study. The design of the field study of empathic response to filmed literature included four principal elements: (1) conducting and videotaping sessions of dramatic and discussion response to filmed

A summary of levels and stages for analysis of empathy--the instrument.

IDENTIFICATION

1. Exterior Imitation--imitates another person or animal through facial expressions, body posture, movement or sounds. The object of imitation is present.
2. Interiorized Imitation--through words, play, or drama, reports facial expressions, body posture, movement, or sounds observed in another person or animate being or in self. Object of imitation need not be present in time or space, but may be. Any verbal imitation is, of necessity, interiorized even though concurrent with the imitated.

DIFFERENTIATION

3. Resistance--through discourse, play, or drama, expresses in words, facial expression, use of body, or sounds, an uncomfortable recognition of the difference between himself and the other person or personified being. Expresses fear, distrust, dislike, uneasiness, bewilderment, or superstition, sometimes in exaggerated imitation of body or speech. Resistance includes voodoo and other negative occult practices.
4. Reidentification--expresses through discourse, play, or drama, in words, facial expression, use of the body, and sounds, a recognition of a relationship

between self and "other" including likenesses and differences. Exhibits friendly imitation in body, sound, or speech; makes friendly overtures; gently teases; accepts plans or advice of the other person.

EMPATHY

5. Creative Empathic Problem Solving--uses his own ideas to improve relationships; suggests solutions for inter-personal conflicts or personal problems; exhibits conscious good-will toward other person through words and deeds; includes himself in the good-will; exhibits his ideas through such behaviors as creative dramatics, improvisational drama, introspection, soliloquy, counseling, dialogue, value exploration, and open-ended questioning.

6. Altruistic Empathy-- expresses in words or actions that he understands both himself and the "other"; puts the relationship into a frame of mutuality. Consciously places his own welfare in subordination to the welfare of the relationship. Uses good-will as his motivation and consciously identifies with the "other." His physical imitation of the "other" approaches the aesthetic (drama, dance); verbal imitation tends toward poetry. Consciously replaces negative affect with altruistic good-will or empathy.

7. Silence or Confusion--pauses, short periods of silence, and periods of confusion in which what is taking place cannot be understood by the observer.

literature, (2) training three judges to use the instrument to identify instances of empathic response observed on videotaped protocols, (3) conducting an inter-judge reliability check based on observations of identical portions of videotaped protocols, and (4) presenting the results of the study by means of visual displays and discussion.

The entire hour-long session done with each of six groups, one preschool, one kindergarten, two fifth-sixth grade classes of gifted children and two university level classes, was videotaped except for the time spent in showing Loon's Necklace. Introductory remarks and transitional portions captured on the tape were eliminated from the portions to be judged. Portions submitted to the judges consisted of motivation, individual dramatized response, group dramatized response, and discussion of questions. The training of judges was conducted during a two-week period immediately preceding the actual judging of the protocols.

The inter-judge reliability check was conducted during the actual judging of the protocols. Identical portions of videotape were viewed by each judge for that purpose. The results are reported below.

Four types of visual displays were developed to help report the results relating to the two hypotheses. A three-by-six cell, a linegraph, and a matrix of paired responses presented the results applicable to Hypothesis 1. A scattergram displayed the results relevant to Hypothesis 2. The linegraphs can be seen in Figures 1, 2, and 3. The scattergrams of group dramatized response can be seen in Figures 4, 5, 6, and 7.

Insert Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7

Results

A reliability form adapted from that used by Flanders (1967) to train observers of interaction in the classroom made use of three observers

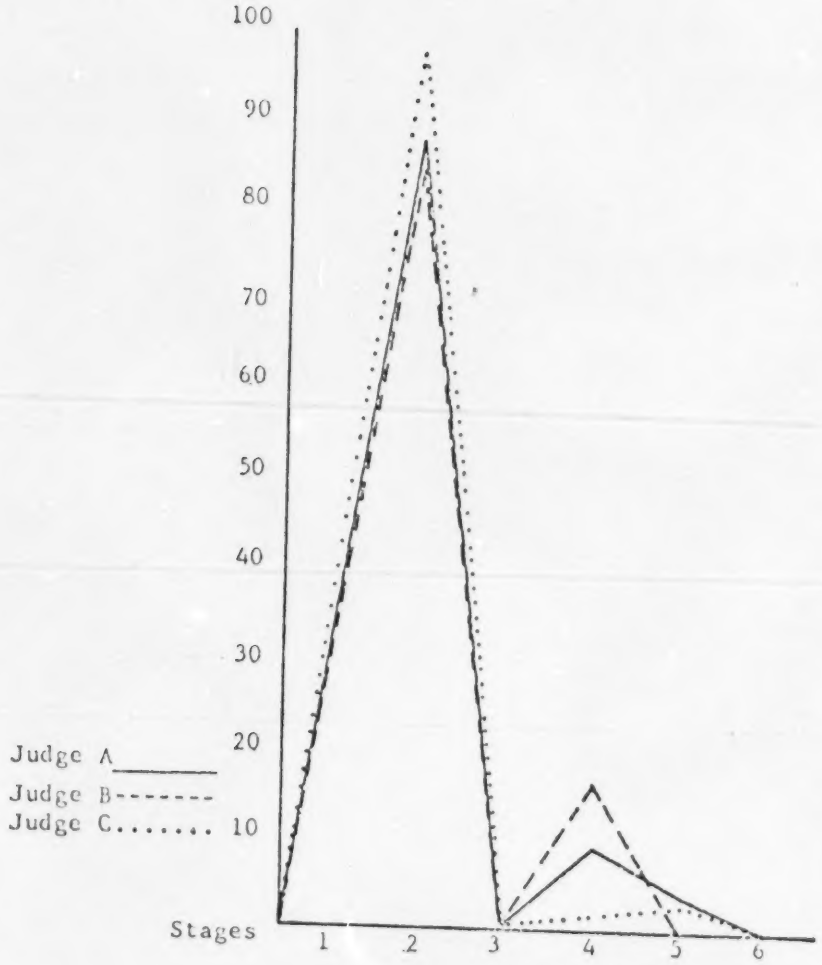


Figure 1

Proportions of Empathic Response Observed by Judges at Pre-School Level

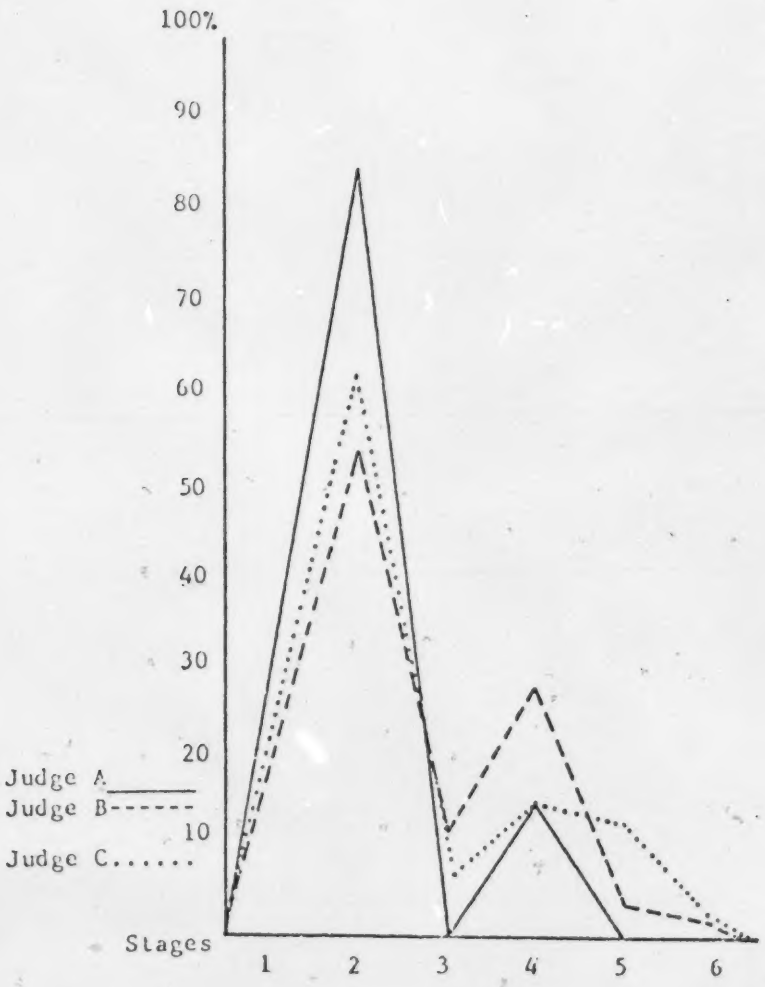


Figure 2

Proportions of Empathic Response Observed by Judges at Fifth-Sixth Grade

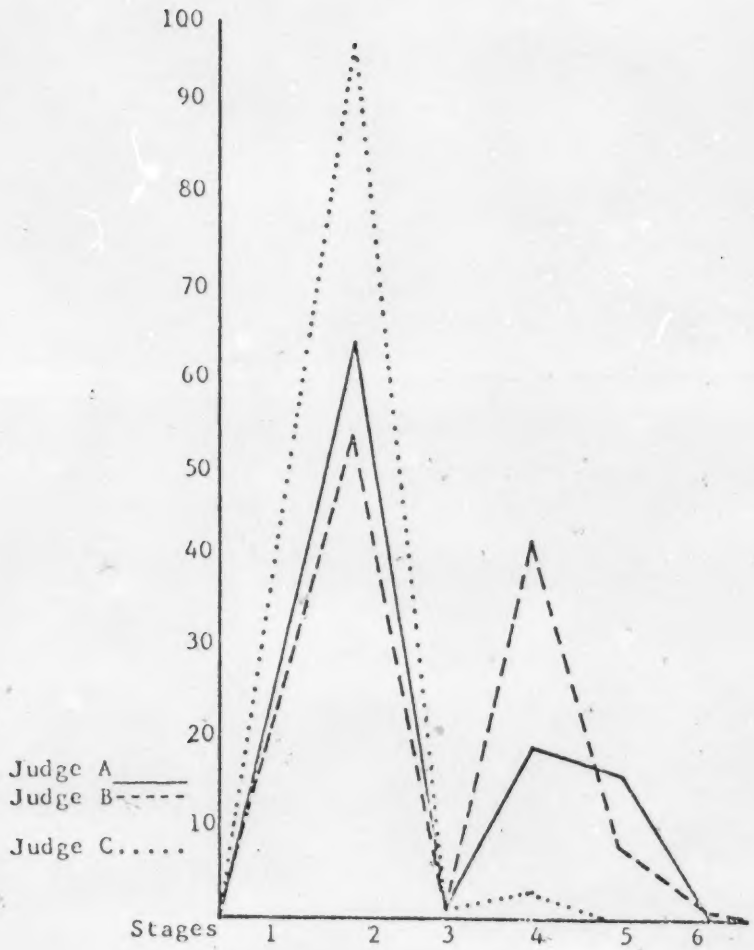
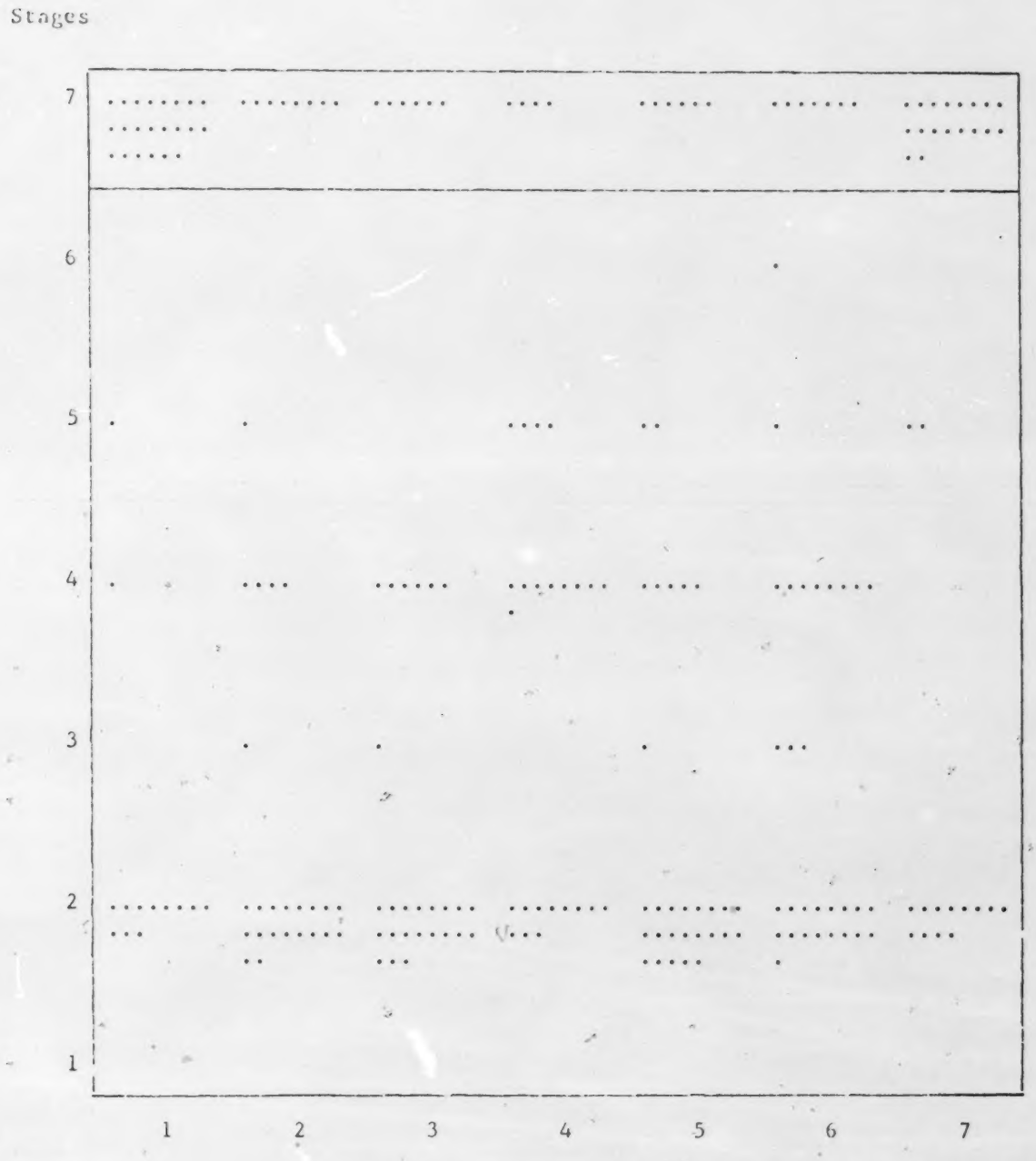


Figure 3

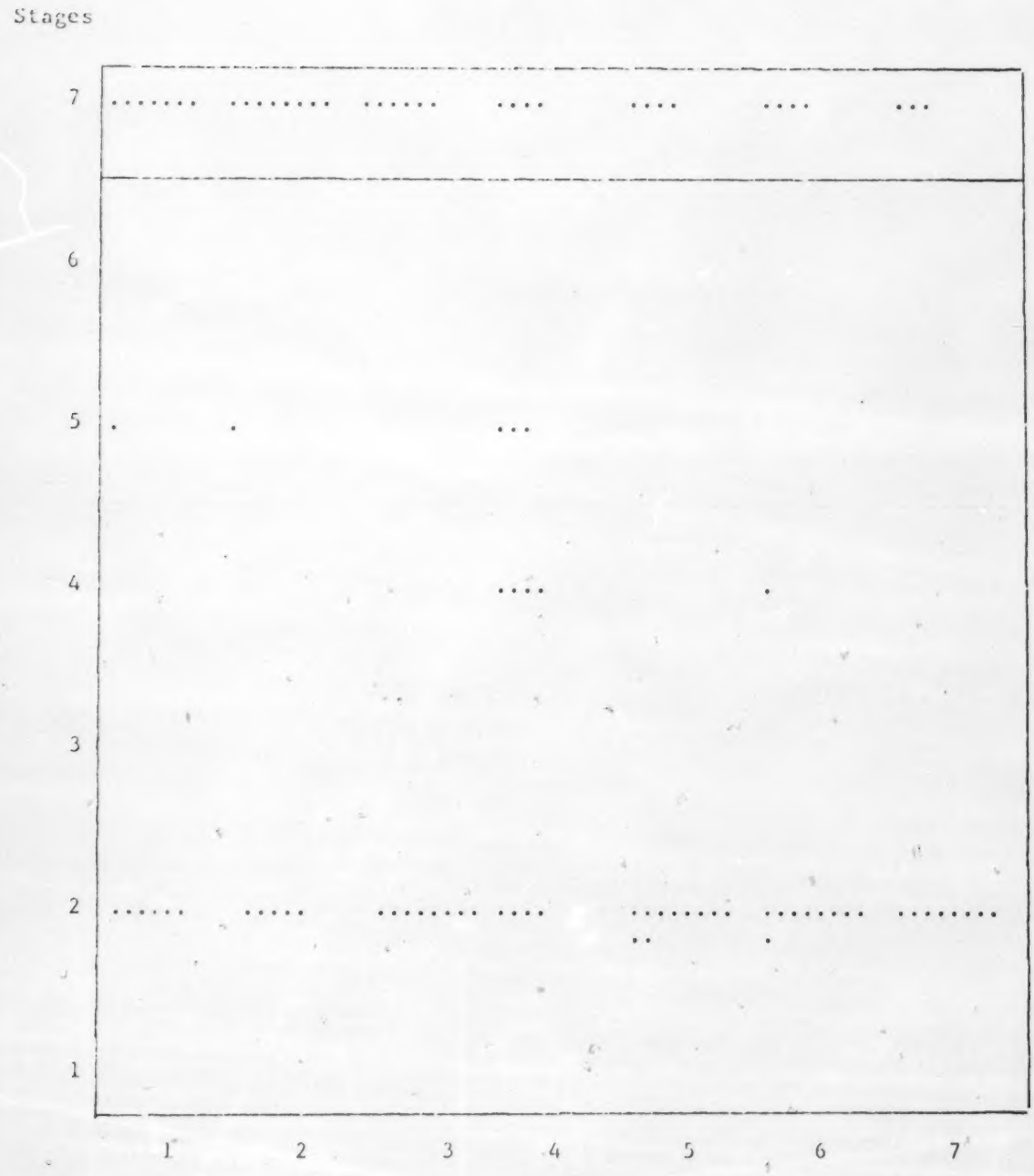
Proportion of Empathic Response Observed by Judges at College-Level



Note: Each dot represents one instance of empathic response observed by a judge.

Figure 4

Scattergram of Total Group Dramatized Response

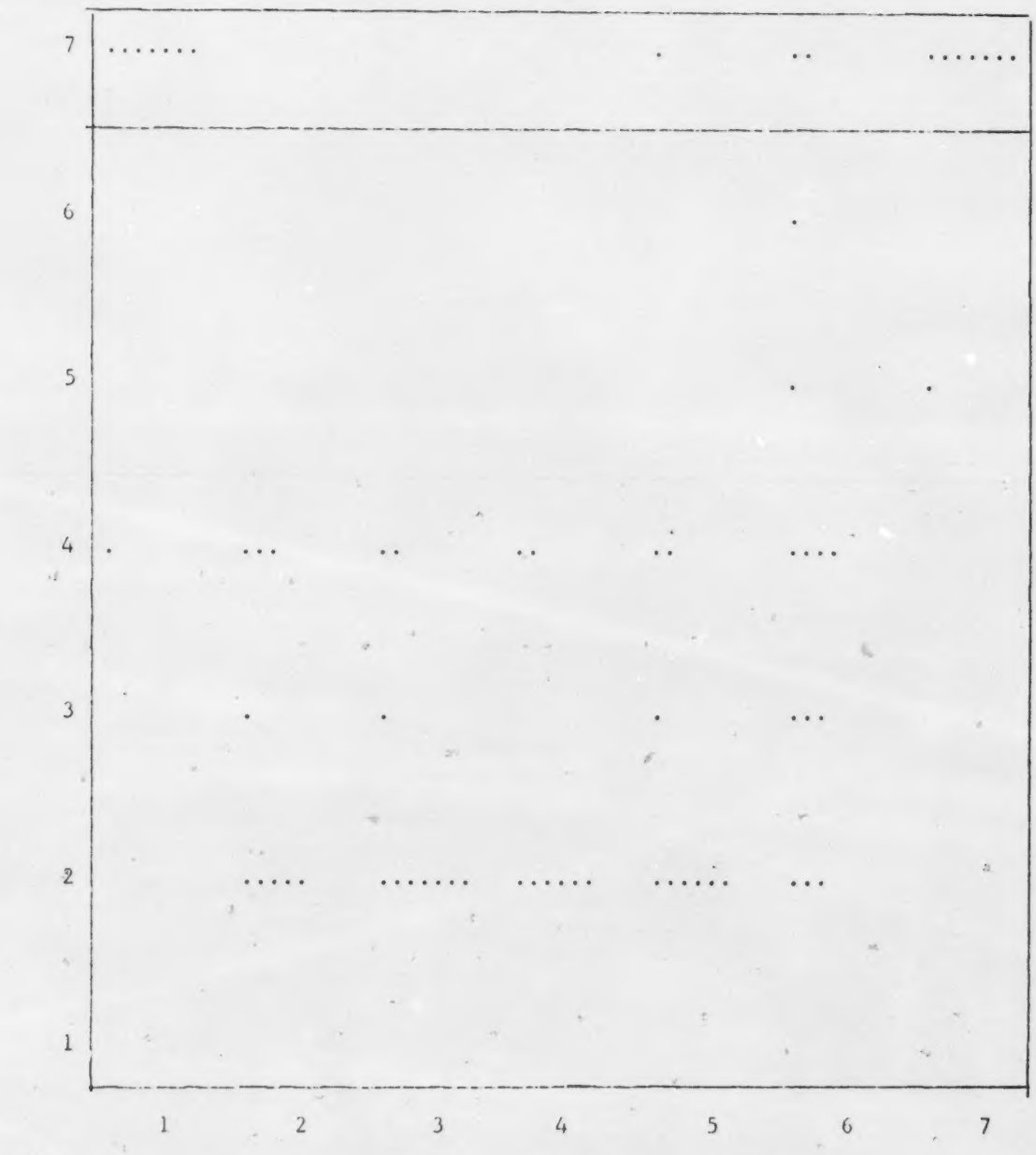


Seven Intervals for Group Dramatizations

Note: Each dot represents one instance of empathic response observed by a judge.

Figure 5

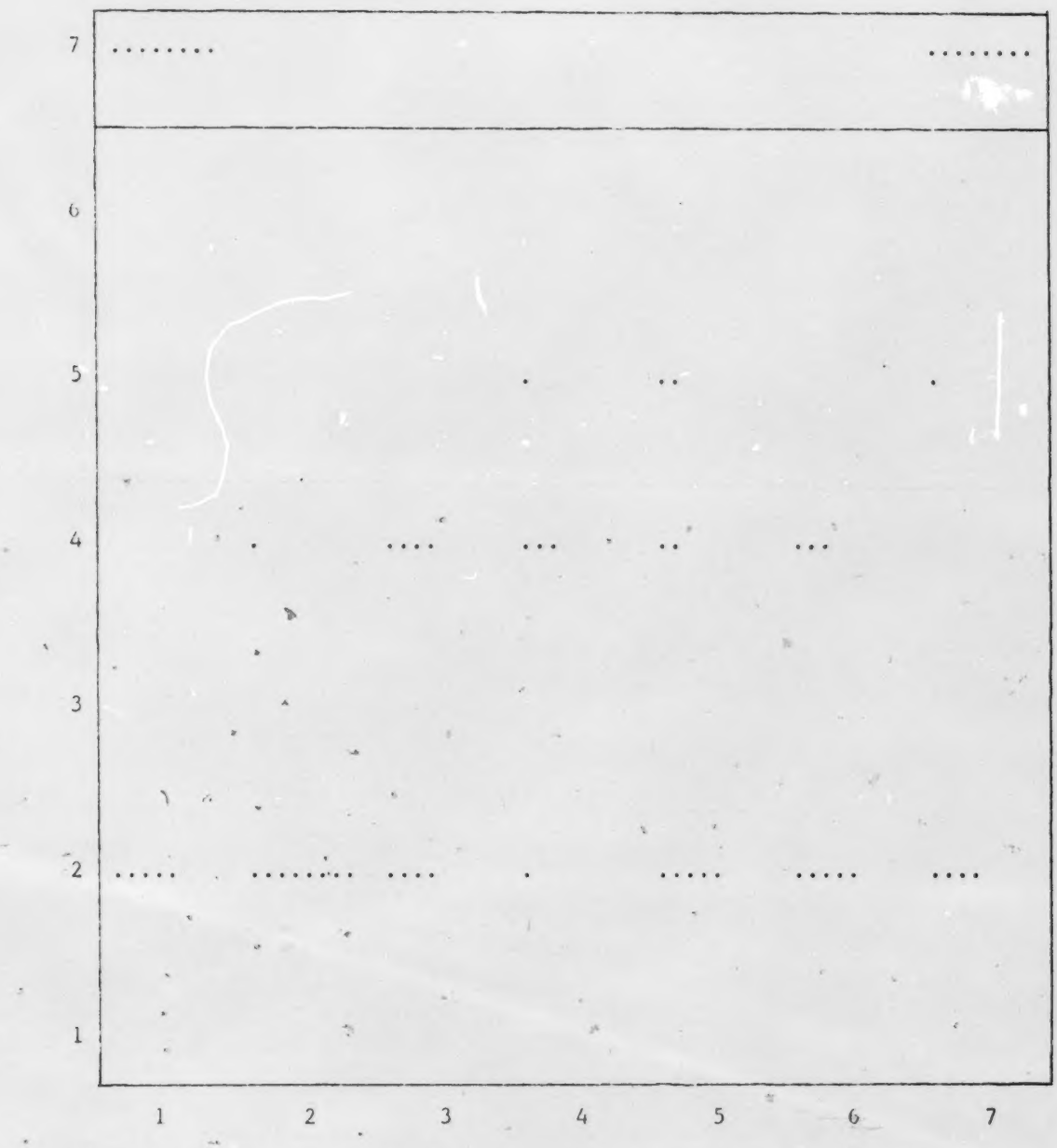
Scattergram of Pre-School Group Dramatized Response



Note: Each dot represents one instance of empathic response observed by a judge.

Figure 6

Scattergram of Fifth-Sixth Grade Group Dramatized Response



Note: Each dot represents one instance of empathic response observed by a judge.

Figure 7

Scattergram of College-Age Group Dramatized Response

rather than the two used by Flanders. The inclusion of a third judge necessitated the addition of six columns to the form. Flanders' reliability form did not include the calculation of π. The form used in this study did include the calculation of π for each pair of judges, as well as an average of the π's for the three pairs of judges.

Reliability

When tallies under the seven numbers on the instrument sheet were kept separate, the average reliability among the three pairs of judges was .34.

When the numbers one through six on the instrument sheet, representing Stages One through Six in A Hierarchy of Empathy were divided into lower-half, higher half, and the number seven constituting a division by itself, average reliability among the three pairs of judges was .51.

When the numbers one through six were grouped together and number seven constituted a group by itself, empathy versus non-empathy, the average reliability was .94.

When the numbers one through six constituted one group and number seven constituted another (after obligatory beginning and ending sevens had been subtracted) the average reliability was .89.

Interpretation of Results of Reliability Check

The pattern of larger inter-judge reliability associated with the grouping of the tallies into larger units as measured by the instrument suggest the existence of an empathy construct. This suggestion is reinforced by the .94 average reliability found among the three pairs of judges when empathy was isolated from non-empathy. When obligatory beginning and ending sevens were removed from the non-empathy category, the average reliability was still a high .89. The low reliability .34

incurred when all stages of empathy plus non-empathy were considered separately reflects the difficulty judges had in agreeing on the occurrence of some stages, notably Stage Three (Resistance), as well as Stage Four (Reidentification), and Stage Five (Creative Empathic Problem Solving).

Results of Judging as Related to Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 states that the proportion of instances of higher stages of empathic response will increase as the age of the respondents increases. This hypothesis was designed to test the developmental property of the empathic process as defined in A Hierarchy of Empathy. If the proposed theory is valid, one would expect to see a lack of response at the upper stages of empathy among the middle grade groups as well as among adult groups. And one would expect to see occasional Stage Five and Stage Six responses, perhaps in the middle grade groups, but certainly in the adult groups. Figures 1, 2, and 3 show that these expectations were in fact fulfilled.

The three linegraphs (Figures 1, 2, and 3) were constructed on calculated proportions of empathic response. The three judges are represented by a solid line, a broken line, and a dotted line. Accordingly, the results of individual judges' finding are easily seen in comparison with one another. In addition, a sense of the trend of increase in proportions of high-level response as the age of the respondents increases can be gained by looking at the three linegraphs representing levels in sequence.

Results of Judging as Related to Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 states that the trend of stages of empathy to be observed over a period of time in a group dramatization that is freely

planned by the participants will be upward rather than downward. Hypothesis 2 is intended to test the hierarchical nature of empathic response, that is, the tendency of higher stages of empathy to build on and incorporate lower stages of empathy. If the proposed theory is valid in a hierarchical sense, one might expect to see in a dramatized situation, which presumably mirrors human interaction fairly realistically, a gradual development of higher forms of empathic response. One would hope to see intermediate stages between the base response and the highest stage response represented.

A scattergram (Figures 4, 5, 6 an 7) was chosen as the vehicle for displaying instances of response occurring at different stages of empathy within a period of time. The vertical axis on the scattergram represents Stages One through Seven. The horizontal axis represents the length of any dramatization divided into seven intervals. Since the dramatizations vary in length, the scattergram represents the entire response in each dramatization assigned to seven segments of the horizontal axis on a sequential basis. The length of any dramatization is divided into seven parts as equal to each other as can be arranged. The numbers one to seven divide the dramatization from first to last. The response, no matter what its duration, is distributed among the seven intervals as evenly as possible.

Clustering of sevens. The judges used a seven to indicate the beginning and ending of each dramatization, a fact which accounts for the peculiar clustering of sevens in the first and last segments. The fact that the first segment in Figure 4 contains four more dots than the last segment means that the number seven was used to represent confusion

or non-meaningful response in addition to the obligatory seven. This feature did not appear at the fifth-sixth or college-age levels, but did appear at the pre-school level.

Telescoping best expedient. While the method of telescoping the longer dramatizations in order to make a comparison of unequal lengths of dramatized protocols is not mathematically rigorous, it was the best expedient among alternatives. In the field study, subjects were given complete freedom to select the subject of dramatization, to practice it, and to act it out before a group while being videotaped. Some method of comparing unequal lengths of dramatization was necessary.

At the pre-school level, however, the writer suggested to the children what characters and situations they might enjoy playing. She did not direct the acting nor provide any details of what they should do. The minimal guidance provided was necessary because of the extreme youth of the children and their inability to accept responsibility for planning and carrying out a scene alone. The pre-school protocols of group response actually consisted of one short dramatization following another, sometimes the same incident, but with different children participating. At that level, therefore, the elements of group planning and sustained interpretation of an incident were missing.

Pre-school scattergram. The pre-school scattergram (Figure 5) exhibits a climax of higher stage response midway in the time periods with a tapering off in the latter half. This pattern does not support Hypothesis 2 in its forecast of an upward trend. The hypothesis was compromised, however, even before the results were in because the children did not fully plan and carry through the dramatizations. The results can be used to suggest

other hypotheses however. One such hypothesis is that the trend of response at pre-school level might be a function of the children's freshness rather than their tendency to build higher response on lower.

Fifth-sixth grade scattergram. The data belonging to the fifth-sixth grade level (Figure 6) is more representative of the total range of empathic response than is the data at pre-school or college-age levels. Except for Stage One (Exterior Imitation), all stages of response are represented at the fifth-sixth grade level, even a few of the variety labeled seven, which represents non-meaning or confusion.

Stage Four (Reidentification) is present throughout most time intervals. But Stage Five (Creative Empathic Problem Solving) and Stage Six (Altruistic Empathy) are concentrated in the last two intervals, thus lending support to Hypothesis 2. A unique and interesting feature found at the fifth-sixth grade level is the presence of Stage Three (Resistance) throughout the time span. Neither pre-school nor college-age protocols showed any threes.

It should be noted that the fifth-sixth grade children who took part in this study were perhaps atypical of that grade population. They were members of two classes of gifted children drawn from several contiguous neighborhoods in the Seattle school system. Not only did the children have an exceptionally high degree of cognitive development for their age, but the program itself offered experiences that the average intermediate grade child does not have. In the affective domain, however, there is no reason to suppose that the children were unrepresentative of their age-group.

Examination of the records of individual dramatizations at the fifth-sixth grade level showed gaps in the hierarchy. The trend exhibited on the scattergram comes into evidence only when group responses are melded into a composite.

College-age scattergram. The scattergram of college-age response (Figure 7) lends support to Hypothesis 2, although not with as comprehensive occurrence of the various stages as the fifth-sixth grade scattergram. Stage Four (Reidentification) is present in varying amounts throughout, but Stage Five (Creative Empathic Problem Solving) appears first midway through the time intervals and is present in the last interval. Stage Six (Altruistic Empathy) is missing. At the college-age level, the only sevens present are obligatory, indicating that the amount of non-meaningful response in the protocols of dramatized group response was nil. The Stage Fives (Creative Empathic Problem Solving) as a whole, followed, rather than preceded, the occurrence of Stage Fours (Reidentification), a fact which suggests their dependence on the immediately lower stage of response. This fact supports the assumption of hierarchy in Hypothesis 2 at the college-age level.

Together the fifth-sixth grade scattergram and the college-age scattergram lend support to Hypothesis 2 in their trend of occurrence of higher stages of empathy as dramatizations developed in time. The lack of Stage Three (Resistance) response at the college-age invites speculation. One possible explanation, which would support the hierarchical hypothesis, is that if Stage Three (Resistance) can occur only after imitation has been interiorized (Stage Two), it is likely to be manifest first in middle childhood. Perhaps adults, who have learned to recognize their own Resistance, express it internally so that it is not observable. The

interiorization of Resistance would support the hierarchical hypothesis.

In the scattergrams, where high stage response occurs, there is a tendency for the full range of stages of response from Stage Two upward to be represented. The absence of Stage One (Exterior Imitation) suggests two explanations: (1) the unself-conscious type of Stage One response would require a more natural setting than the study provided, and (2) the youngest children taking part in the study were probably already beyond the very earliest sensory-motor stage of response described in Stage One, so that their base of empathic response was at Stage Two (Interiorized Imitation) rather than Stage One (Exterior Imitation).

The scattergrams as a whole exhibited a close relationships between Stage Four (Reidentification) and Stage Five (Creative Empathic Problem Solving) with Stage Five apparently preceded by and accompanied by Stage Four response. Stage Six (Altruistic Empathy) was seen only once (at the fifth-sixth grade level). Other response on the protocol was at Stage Two (Interiorized Imitation). If there was a complete range of response accompanying the one instance of Stage Six, it was interiorized. Considering the high level of abstraction that a Stage Six (Altruistic Empathy) response demands, such interiorization is not unlikely.

In the totality of the scattergrams, Hypothesis 2 was supported. The incidence of higher stage response was greater in the latter half of the time intervals in the combined scattergrams (Figure 4). There was a slight upward trend. Because there were differences in the patterns revealed within age-levels, further studies are indicated.

Discussion

Reliability Results Unstable

The results of the interjudge reliability check were too unstable to permit the statement that, given training such as the three judges had, three intelligent people could reach a satisfactory level of agreement on what stages of empathy were exhibited in videotaped protocols.

Kerlinger (1965) said that to be interpretable, a test must be reliable. He pointed out that, while reliability is not the most important facet of measurement, it is still extremely important. Like money, the lack of it is the real problem. Kerlinger's statement would seem to undermine this whole study of empathic response were it not for the fact that the study is not truly experimental. It is, however, empirical. It is an attempt to bring theory into the realm of observation. There is an almost complete lack of control of the various elements that comprise the study, a fact which prohibits the use of the term "experimental" to describe the study. The writer regards the study, rather, as a comparatively realistic attempt to subject a theory of empathy to the stress of empirical observation so that both its strengths and weaknesses can be highlighted. A low inter-judge reliability in this context is a challenge rather than a deterrent.

Deficiencies of the Study Viewed

The following possibilities are suggested to explain the deficiencies in inter-judge reliability found in the study: (1) the stages, as defined, are not sufficiently susceptible to descrimination, (2) the judges need longer training on videotapes similar to those they are required to judge, (3) empathy, as a constuct, may not be refined enough

to test, and (4) two judges, rather than three, should be trained to a criterion level of agreement based on the writer's judgment tempered by experience.

Of the four possible deficiencies, two predominate in the writer's judgment. They are: (1) that the training of judges was not long enough nor focused on protocols sufficiently similar to those used in the actual study, and (2) that the stages, as defined, were not sufficiently susceptibles to discrimination. The use of three judges in the initial study, however, helped reveal complexities and problems more clearly than the use of two judges would have. Ease of training for reliability was sacrificed, to some extent, in favor of exploring for problems. Only after further refinements in the theory have been made would more rigorous experimental procedures be useful.

Possible Problem Areas

Perusal of visual displays of the judging has prompted these assessments: (1) Stages Two (Interiorized Imitation) and Four (Reidentification) can be hard to discriminate, (2) it is not always easy to discriminate between Stages Four (Reidentification) and Five (Creative Empathic Problem Solving), and (3) Stage Three (Resistance) is observed infrequently enough to arouse suspicions about either its existence or its operational definition. The lack of observed Stage One (Exterior Imitation) also requires explanation.

Stage Three Open to Study

In the reliability checks, only one judge observed Stage Three (Resistance) responses. In the actual judging situation, all three judges saw instances of Stage Three response, two approximately in the same

amount and the third only minimally. The two situations differed in that the reliability check was done on identical portions of protocol while the actual study was done on separate and independent protocols. These statements are made to suggest that it was not impossible for any of the judges to observe Stage Three response. Nevertheless, Stage Three (Resistance) remains a problem area that should be subjected to further definition and experimental observation.

Implications

The implications deriving from the tentative answers to the two-fold problem presented in this study fall under three categories: (1) the theoretical, (2) the practical, and (3) research needed.

Theoretical Implications

A Hierarchy of Empathy exhibits theoretical likenesses to Piagetian developmental cognitive theory in its structure. In its process, it may constitute another link in the growing chain of theoretical constructs claiming kinship with Piaget's theory. Kohlberg's explorations of the development of morality show a similar theoretical base. If diverse psychological constructs such as intelligence, morality, and empathy can be shown to be closely related, all benefit from association within a single paradigm.

Resistance and negative empathy. The positing of a stage of Resistance within the hierarchical development of empathy could help explain the existence of a psychological state variously called antipathy in more classic times, or negative empathy in recent psychological explorations.

Affective versus cognitive empathy. Because use of the word empathy has always exhibited affective connotations in spite of its emphasis on

knowing or understanding persons, A Hierarchy of Empathy could prove to be the framework within which both states are explained, as well as sensory-motor manifestations of empathy.

Counselor empathy included. Much of the experimental literature on empathy concerns the detection and measurement of empathy in counselor-patient relationships. The question most such studies ask is not, "What is empathy?" Instead, it is "How can empathy be measured or taught?" There is an implicit assumption that empathy has already been defined. In light of the present exploratory study, such an assumption may not be warranted. A Hierarchy of Empathy could prove to be the theoretical framework that performs that service.

Practical Implications

Several practical implications derive from the possible placement of empathy theory within an overall Piagetian developmental cognitive paradigm. Some of the implications for both teachers and learners will be stated briefly in the paragraphs that follow.

Developing sensory-motor and affective responses. Current interest in extra-lingual communication such as body language, as well as training in the affective domain such as values-education, indicates an expanding concept of the role of education. It is possible that A Hierarchy of Empathy will provide the rationale for teachers to help children develop their sensory-motor responses such as body-language purposefully within a cogent theory and their affective responses such as personal appreciation or valuing of personal relationships within the same theory at the same time they are developing their normal linguistic communication skills, which are largely cognitive in character.

Developing empathy as a prelude to morality. The events of recent times have emphasized the importance of morality within a culture. Even before the public felt the need, educators were moving in the direction of identifying the development of morality within the child. Kohlberg's morality investigations are perhaps the best known in educational circles. Because A Hierarchy of Empathy follows a similar developmental paradigm as does Kohlberg's morality construct, and because a relationship to moral development is explicitly indicated in the empathy theory, teachers may find within A Hierarchy of Empathy the rationale for teaching empathy as a prelude to morality.

Developing empathy for creative personal relationships. Society recognizes a need for strengthening personal ties in an era when the economy seems to push in the direction of dehumanization. Within the schools, teachers, administrators, and students want more personal relationships instead of stereotyped roles. Because the fostering of personal relationships is an endeavor sometimes fraught with peril, the provision of a rationale within which to teach creative approaches to understanding others would seem desirable. The empathy theory presented in these pages may provide that rationale.

Promoting sequential empathic development. While most people recognize the value of empathy, they are, perhaps, not cognizant of the differing forms which empathy can take. Also they are probably not used to thinking of empathy as a developmental process. If the sequence of development suggested in the present study is affirmed in subsequent studies, teachers will have the rationale for building on whatever developmental stage of empathy the child manifests in order to encourage further development at the next stage.

Promoting empathic development in teachers. As a corollary to building on empathic strengths in students in order to promote further growth in empathy, teachers themselves could use A Hierarchy of Empathy to identify their own dominant level of empathic response. They could find motivation for their own further development in personal relations.

Research Implications

In order that the foregoing theoretical and practical implications may be acted upon, there is an express need for further research in empathy as a developmental hierarchical cognitive-thrust process. Follow-up studies can come from two sources, the author, or other educators or theorists who may find something within this study to provoke questions that they would like to answer. Either way, the construct A Hierarchy of Empathy is subject to modification or rejection as further research helps clarify or rule out stages and levels as posited.

If a revised construct emerges from future research done by the writer, other researchers are invited to test it and extrapolate. If another researcher offers a divergent or variant construct, the opportunity for comparisons and refinements will exist.

Whatever the validity of A Hierarchy of Empathy, the need remains for theoretical and practical explorations in empathy theory in much the same way that further studies in the development of morality are needed. While sympathy, as a construct, has probably not been explored in recent times, such an exploration could prove exciting in itself and enlightening on a comparative basis with empathy explorations.

It is probable that the research implications of a theory of developmental empathy are only faintly glimpsed at this time.

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